

The First Church: Worthy Traits

THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, Acts 2:1-7:60

The First Church: Worthy Traits, Acts 2:41-47

2. (Acts 2:42) Steadfastness: the early believers were a people who “continued steadfastly” in four things.

Acts 2:42 (NASB)

⁴²“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

Spiritual Duties

It Was a Saved Church

It Was a Scriptural Church

It Was a Fellowshiping Church

DEEPER STUDY # 3

Acts 2:42 (NASB)

⁴²“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”
(Acts 2:42) Continued stedfastly (*esan proskarterountes*): to continue, persevere, endure, stick, and persist. A person does not quit, back off, fade away, or slip back. He continues on steadfastly.

DEEPER STUDY # 4

Acts 2:42 (NASB)

⁴²“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”
(Acts 2:42) In doctrine (*didachē*): the teaching, the instruction of the apostles. This would include both what Christ taught and His death and resurrection and ascension or exaltation.

It would be the same teaching and instructions.....

1. that are shared in the New Testament.
2. that the disciples wrote to various churches and bodies of believers.

The teaching would be no different. There is only one message, only one Word that saves and roots and grounds people in the Lord—the Word

of God Himself, the message of the New Testament. On the day of Pentecost, the persons who were saved needed to be grounded in the faith. And the only message that could ground them was the message found in the New Testament. It was that message, that doctrine they were taught.

Matthew 28:19-20 (NASB)

¹⁹ “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Luke 24:45-48 (NASB)

⁴⁵ “Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,
⁴⁶ and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,
⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.
⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.”

Thought 1. Note a striking fact: we can be saved and rooted and grounded in the *very same message*. God has given us the very same doctrines and instructions to root and ground us. We can have a true, dynamic apostolic experience and maturity in the Lord. We can grow and know the Lord as intimately as the early believers knew the Lord. In fact, we come short if we do not, for we have the very same doctrine, teachings, and instructions that they had.

DEEPER STUDY # 5

Acts 2:42 (NASB)

⁴² “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

(Acts 2:42) Fellowship: the fellowship wrought by the Spirit of God means more than the association existing in secular groups such as civic clubs and community bodies. There is a vast difference between *community participation* and *spiritual participation*. *Community participation* is based upon neighborly association. *Spiritual participation* is based upon a spiritual union wrought by the Spirit of God. **The distinctiveness is this:** the Holy Spirit is within the Christian believer. The Holy Spirit creates a spiritual union by melting and molding the heart of the Christian believer to the hearts of other believers. He attaches the life of one believer to the lives of other believers. Through the Spirit of God, believers become one in life and purpose. They have a joint life sharing their blessings and needs and gifts together.

Note several things about fellowship that are taught by this passage.

1. Fellowship is being experienced by the new believers because they join other Christians in learning the Scriptures (apostles' teachings) and in worship (prayers and celebrating the Lord's Supper, [Acts 2:41-42](#)).

[Acts 2:41-42 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴¹ "So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

⁴² They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

2. Fellowship forbids an unattached Christian life.

Their fellowship is maintained because they "**continue steadfastly**" in the Scriptures and in worship.

An unattached Christian life is just impossible.

a. Christianity is first an individual matter, but then it becomes a social matter. The Christian is attached to Christ individually, but he is also attached to other believers. He walks with other believers in the Scriptures and in worship.

b. Christianity is first a spiritual organism, but then it becomes a spiritual organization. The Christian has an *inward life*, but he also takes on an *outward form* of life. He becomes a living organization with other Christian believers. He sits at the feet of the apostles' teaching and joins right in with other Christians as they worship together.

c. Christianity makes the true believer a saint (**one who is set apart unto God**), but Christianity is made up of *saints*—plural. Christianity is not just one person; Christianity is many persons—*saints*. The word is often used in the New Testament, but it is never used in the singular.

Christianity is Christianity because the saints study the Scriptures together and worship together.

d. Christianity demands that a believer personally live out such virtues as kindness, longsuffering, and love; **but the believer can do this only in association with others.**

e. Christianity means that the Spirit of God has entered the believer's life, but it also means that the Spirit of God has placed the believer into a corporate body (**the church**), into Christian society itself. The Spirit of God indwells the corporate body of believers as well as the individual.

3. Spiritual fellowship faces two dangers.

a. Fellowship and society can be over-emphasized—to the point that individual salvation is missed. An individual must "**receive His word**" ([Acts 2:41](#)).

[Acts 2:41 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴¹ "So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls."

b. Individual salvation and individual worship, whether through nature or by any other means, can be overly stressed—to the point that Christian fellowship and society can be missed ([Acts 2:42](#); [Hebrews 10:25](#)).

[Acts 2:42 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴²“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

[Hebrews 10:25 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁵“Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

[Romans 12:5 \(NASB\)](#)

⁵“So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

[1 Corinthians 10:17 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁷“Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread.”

[Galatians 3:28 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁸“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

[Ephesians 4:13 \(NASB\)](#)

¹³“Until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”

[1 John 1:7 \(NASB\)](#)

⁷“But if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

[Psalm 119:63 \(NASB\)](#)

⁶³“I am a companion of all those who fear You, And of those who keep Your precepts.”

[Malachi 3:16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶“Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard *it*, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name.”